

The Hour



"keeps up with Hitler to the minute"

NEWS-KEY

Hitler Menaced by Unrest at Home	page 1
Fuehrer's Own Party Men Whisper of His Blunder	4
Helen Keller on Plight of German Blind	5
James True and Argentine Fascists	7
Nazi Definition of Mexican "Aryans"	8

AND OTHER ITEMS

A news-letter issued by the American Council Against Nazi Propaganda, Inc.

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Number 2

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GERMAN OPPOSITION TO HITLER GROWS RAPIDLY

Resistance to War Assumes Wide Proportions - Anti-Hitler Movement Spreads to Many Strata of Society

Berlin, May 6 (Special to The Hour).--An anti-Hitler slogan, painted a few days ago in giant letters on a wall near Duesseldorf, "Remove Hitler who leads us to catastrophe - Hitler is war, we want peace," is but one of many examples of the increased activities of the opposition in Germany. Reports from all parts of the country confirm the growth of the so-called Underground Movement giving the Gestapo many headaches. This important intensification of opposition activities goes back as far as September when fear and panic of war paved the way for an anti-Hitler feeling in the country to an extent previously unknown and opened new possibilities for the groups which, doing patiently their mole-work, have waited for their turn.

The German people no longer feel that Hitler's policy will preserve peace. Even a year ago, when the first news of Hitler's plans against Czechoslovakia began to circulate, a certain nervousness could be noted among the populace. In September, leaflets speaking of war danger appeared in Berlin, Hamburg, Munich, Cologne and all big cities of the Rhineland. The secret radio station ("Freedom-Station 29.8") poured in news about the war-preparations and stirred up fear of catastrophe. Stickers with anti-war slogans made their appearance in great numbers, and on quite a few trains transporting reservists and war material there was a chalked or painted call, "Down with War!" An anti-governmental demonstration, of the type unseen in Berlin for many years, was staged when the armored car division, parading through the capital, was received by women in the throng with shouts, "We want peace!"

The Munich agreement and the appeasement policy had naturally enough their effects on such opposition activities. These activities slowed down in October, although not as much as in previous years.

The Hour

Number 2

Page 2

The November pogroms brought another rise of underground activities. Its base was the horror which the killing of defenseless Jews, the burning of synagogues, and the sacking of Jewish shops had produced in the majority of the population.

The steady growth of the German opposition finds its counterpart in governmental and Gestapo measures. No less than 120,000 informers of the secret police watch tendencies of opposition in churches and church organizations, factories, offices, in the army, among the nobility and conservative circles.

The Nazi watchdogs in apartment houses ("Blockwarts") have received instruction to watch closely who of the tenants is listening to foreign or clandestine broadcasting stations -- these "bonds upon the soul," as the Nazis call them. The Freedom-Station and the German emissions of the B.B.C. (British broadcasting stations) are a terrible nuisance to the Gestapo men who try by all means to interfere with the reception. The ingenuity of the underground militants has overcome Goebbels' invention, the very cheap "People's Radio," which is ordinarily unfit to take short-wave transmissions: Underground people have issued instructions how to adapt the "People's Radio" for short wave and outwitted the sly propaganda minister. The mail the Freedom Station is receiving -- in a roundabout way, of course -- proves its efficiency. A survey among a group of twenty conservatives taken at random shows that thirteen, that is 65%, are listening to the German transmissions of the B.B.C.

The last two months showed a threefold increase of underground publications inside Germany. To a high degree the general anti-war feeling is also an anti-Nazi feeling and, what is even more significant, an anti-Hitler feeling. For, since September, Hitler is no longer excluded from criticism by large groups of the population. The opposition movement develops with less danger than before, because voluntary denunciation of opponents to the Gestapo has considerably decreased. Many people, who in the past refused to participate in opposition activities, are now rendering help and are becoming active. This is noticeable not only among former trade-unionists but also in Catholic circles. In spite of the increasing activities, losses through arrests of active oppositionists have diminished, because they are now more amply protected by popular sympathy.

Six underground peasant newspapers (mimeographed) are now regularly published compared with the two of a few months ago, yet, in the last half-year, not a single leader of the peasant opposition has been caught by the Gestapo. Three underground army newspapers (also mimeographed) circulate regularly among officers and non-commissioned officers. The Gestapo chief, Himmler, keeps on arresting army officers, but the real leaders remain undiscovered. Even among the police force two underground newspapers are published with astonishing regularity; this especially drives Himmler furious.

The Hour

Number 2

Page 3

In March and April on the fences and buildings of the coal mines in Upper Silesia and in the Ruhr there appeared painted slogans expressing sympathy for Czechoslovakia and Poland. Many miners had to go through Gestapo examination with all its appalling cruelty, and some were taken to concentration camps. But the slogan-painting continues, and Nazis working hard at the removal of these signs are a frequent sight. Stickers denouncing high prices and low wages are pasted by what the Germans call "ghost hands" on the walls of factories and offices. Cleverly disguised pamphlets describing Germany's desperate economic situation go from hand to hand, although their possession is punishable by death. Factory meetings of the Nazi organization "German Labor Front" break down because of the barrage of embarrassing questions. Sunday services and church processions are packed. Underground theological lectures are arranged often and attended well. But the Gestapo is unable to find out the men behind the scene.

Germany of 1939 is not what it used to be in 1937 when its people took unwillingly but patiently the heavy burden of the Nazi regime. They talk in street-cars and subways, in churches, offices and factories about the fate Hitler is leading their country to. The more of the so-called vital space ("Lebensraum") is won by the Nazis outside of Germany because of the weakness of democracies, the more the vital space of the Nazi regime within the German people narrows down. They have finally, after six years of horrible lessons, understood to what abyss Hitler is taking them.

In 1939 it is not an easy task for Hitler to convince the troubled German people that it might be necessary for them to go to war for Danzig or a road across the Polish Corridor, or for Italy's so-called Mediterranean interests. If the German opposition can keep up its present pace of growth, he might be unable to convince them at all. The German underground movement is a highly important factor in favor of peace.

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THREE DEVELOPMENTS ENCOURAGE FRENCH IN HOPE FOR PEACE

A retired high ranking officer of the American army writes to The Hour:

Paris, May 2.--Within a few days I have had long conversations with some officers who are close to the high command of the French army, and I gather that their present confidence results from three developments: the large appropriations which England has made for military purposes; the step which she has taken to inaugurate obligatory service, and the warning Pan American speech and subsequent message of President Roosevelt. These occurrences, they think, severely shake Hitler's conviction that he can have his way without a fight, thereby diminishing the chance of war, and greatly improve the French position in case of conflict.

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The Hour

Number 2

Page 4

HITLER'S GREATEST BLUNDER IS CRITICIZED BY HIS OWN NAZIS

Berlin, May 9 (Via Paris, special to The Hour).--In excited whispers, high Nazi party officials and groups of Reichswehr officers closely connected with the Nazi party are discussing what they consider to be Hitler's greatest blunder. They say that after seizing Prague he should have immediately gone on to Danzig before Poland could get any British guarantee which she now has. Instead, they remark, Hitler made a "Sunday outing" to Memel.

On that occasion, for once, roles were reversed in the Reich's high councils: Generals Keitel, Brauchitsch and List favored quick action against Danzig, while Hitler put on the brakes and went to Memel. "Visionary Goebbels" was blamed for telling der Fuehrer that the outside world would tolerate Prague's seizure just as Austria's capture was overlooked, and hence the Polish problem could safely wait. Authoritative "underloaders" around Hitler made nonsensical if alarming speeches of a future Reich surrounded by "protectorates" of the Czech or Slovak territory. Poland and Hungary would fall into the Slovak category -- a benevolent despotism as practised in the former African colonies of the Reich. One high officer of the air-force, noted for his cynicism, commented that such a protectorate system would be to the advantage of the great Polish and Hungarian landlords who, like the plant lice serving certain species of ants, would in the future serve Germany.

These critics within Hitler's own flock maintain that his failure to follow up Prague's seizure is worse than the haste with which it was seized. "What is worth doing, is worth doing well," these groups complain. However, Chamberlain's avoidance in recent speeches of any mention of resurrecting the Czech state is thought to be a good augury for possible appeasements and the winning of Poland away from the non-aggression front.

The Nazi critics also fear that Hitler's hesitancy gave the initiative over to England and paved the way for Roosevelt's appeal to Hitler which placed der Fuehrer "between the devil and the deep blue sea." But of the two sets of men who reproach Hitler for his haste and for his lack of haste, both agree that, as a corrective to his blunder, some action is needed.

In the light of these currents of thought in the Nazi hierarchy, Hitler's latest speech is a bid to resume the initiative in the European "dynamics," a powerful effort to break through the "peace front." The effort is, however, attended by great risks. The truth is that in desperation Hitler is ready to chance much. The Nazi critics of Hitler, while complaining of his mistake, nevertheless hope that, in the event of war, allies will be won to the Third Reich who would not ordinarily adhere to Hitler's camp. It is said in Berlin that "when things are moving fast, even war-luck can be won to one's side."

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HELEN KELLER ON THE PLIGHT OF THE DEAF AND BLIND IN GERMANY

Miss Helen Keller, who is a member of the American Council Against Nazi Propaganda, writes to The Hour:

Westport, Conn., May 6.--Judging from the periodicals in Braille I read and countless letters I have received, the welfare of the Teutonic blind has deteriorated. There is a large federation of blind Germans with headquarters in Berlin and Dresden. About a hundred and fifty deaf-blind form a part of this union. The neediest among them are provided with some apparatus and sheets of Braille paper, but the blind of greater Germany generally are not as well off as they used to be.

Before the Nazis came into power, the sightless received important financial aid from private sources, but at present philanthropy throughout Germany is facing a serious crisis, and, as always in the cutting of budgets, the blind suffer most. I do not know the number of refugees without sight. On account of their handicap few countries, if any, will admit them.

There is no respite for my bruised mind and aching heart from accounts of blind or deaf persons under Nazi dictatorship who suffer because they hold independent views, or are of Jewish descent. Their plight is caused by the same inhumanity that debars the children of non-conformists from school, spits upon them openly and leaves them to starve. Consistently every obstacle is placed in the way of educating or employing the Semite blind. They are excluded from all associations for the handicapped and centers of good-will, so that they are robbed of spiritual sunshine and the few recreations their misfortune has left them. Their lot is doubly bleak.

Among the incidents of the sadistic terrorism inflicted upon Vienna after the Anschluss was the expulsion of the faculty and students from the Israelitish Institute for the Blind. Although the Director's life was in danger, yet he would not quit Vienna until he had secured whatever protection was possible for the little children, but the adult blind were dispersed, and they are still drifting everywhere. Before the Israelitish Institute was closed, many of its blind had been rehabilitated with rare ability for intellectual pursuits, excellent workmanship, and a degree of self-support. Now this priceless treasure -- this one ewe-lamb -- has been torn from them, and no relief is granted.

If the deaf-blind are found guilty of not being full-blooded Aryans, the Nazi regime stamps them also with racial inferiority. One of them, an Austrian whom I have known through correspondence for twenty years, writes me that she finds life conditions peculiarly hard because she is both a liberal Catholic and a daughter of the Jewish race. She has a gift of poetry. I have a sketch of her life in German verse which was to have been broadcasted, but the Nazis forbade her even this harmless bit of self-expression, and she cannot get any of her literary work made

The Hour

Number 2

Page 6

public. Her world has now become as small as the tomb! So the story of the unfortunate who belong to the persecuted goes on endlessly, and there is no visible hope of redress.

These injustices crushing intelligence and virtue in defenseless afflicted people of another race are without excuse or parallel. Before such wantonness philosophy staggers, and faith is sore tried.

Out of my own blessedness in mind and freedom I cry to whoever may read these words: Hold fast to democracy! Never take it for granted. Cherish it and renew it like the blood that keeps your heart beating. For democracy alone safeguards the art of thinking by which we blind and seeing, normal and hindered, may create lives worthy of human beings.

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CONQUERORS IN CZECHIA ARE GRASPING YET UNCERTAIN

Letters and travelers from Czechoslovakia report that in conversations with the natives young German soldiers betray an astonishing degree of vagueness and uncertainty when questioned as to why they are there as conquerors. Many soldiers try but cannot answer along the line of official Nazi ideology of "Lebensraum" (room to live). The Czechs' conclusion is that either the Nazi leaders have of late been neglecting the job of "political education" in the German army or, what is more likely, such official teachings just do not leave an impression on the troops.

The feverish tempo of building the great automobile road Breslau-Vienna is occasionally disrupted by strikes of Czech laborers. At one point in northern Moravia, roadbuilders struck because they were paid but half of promised wages. The laborers' camp was at once surrounded by guards and Gestapo agents, and the strikers were taken to work under armed escort.

A strike was reported to have taken place at the Prague works of Skoda. It was caused by the rise in food-prices since the seizure of Czechoslovakia.

All the post-office branches in Prague are swamped with parcels of food and other goods which German officers and soldiers are sending from the occupied territory to their families in the Reich.

Shortage of wheat flour is noticed throughout Czechia. In Prague beginning with May 1 the baking of confectionery products is permitted only if various substitutes are added to pure wheat flour.

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PAN AMERICAN NEWS

(Gathered by the Council for Pan American Democracy)

James True Praised by Argentine Fascists

A pamphlet entitled "Roosevelt is a Jew," published in Buenos Aires, attempts to create in the minds of its readers the idea that the people of the United States are "awakening," and are joining the anti-Jewish forces. The "awakening," it seems, is the result of the work of James True, one of this country's outstanding anti-Semites. According to the Argentine fascists behind the publication and distribution of the pamphlet, Mr. True is eminently respectable, because he has an office on the twelfth floor of the "majestic skyscraper," the National Press Building in Washington. He receives high praise from the author of the pamphlet for carrying anti-Jewish sentiment into the very heart of North America.

The pamphlet suggests that James True more nearly represents the American people than does President Roosevelt. It is a piece of propaganda directly aimed at the good will which has been created between the Americas by the Good Neighbor Policy.

Director of Oil Wells Linked with Pro-Nazi Magazine

The recent Nazi attempt at a putsch in Patagonia has brought into the open the close connection between a leading Nazi magazine of Argentina, Clarínada, and the government owned oil wells. It has been disclosed that Carlos Silveyra, the editor of the magazine, is the nephew of Ricardo Silveyra, the director of the oil wells. Heavy advertising from the Federal Oil Company gives Clarínada substantial financial support. Clarínada, in return, is circulated throughout all of the Argentine, and is spreading through its articles the theories and propaganda of the Nazis.

This is particularly significant in view of the fact that one of the objectives of the Nazis during their attempt to set up a separate state in Patagonia was to give Germany access to the government oil wells located at Comodoro Rivadavia, along the Atlantic coastal plain of Patagonia. The oil wells are not far from the Falkland Islands, which are considered a strategic location in wartime because of their control of the Straits of Magellan. Because of Germany's distance from fuel during the World War, it will be remembered, she lost the battle at the Falkland Islands and the Straits of Magellan are of strategic importance for a future war.

Despite the Argentine government's investigation into the Nazi plot to take Patagonia, the director of its oil wells is still able to propagandize through Clarínada for the Nazis.

The Hour

Number 2

Page 8

"Sarmiento, the Undesirable"

Sarmiento, who is to Latin America what Abraham Lincoln is to the United States, is the subject of a fascist attack in a newly published pamphlet in the Argentine, called "Sarmiento, the Undesirable." The pamphlet is issued by the Society of the Friends of Crisol (Asociacion Amigos de Crisol), which disseminates fascist pamphlets and leaflets, and which stems from the weekly magazine Crisol, one of the foremost anti-American and anti-Semitic organs of fascism in Argentina.

Sarmiento, the most beloved father of democracy in Argentina, was the leader in the movement of secularization in education. It was he who introduced the American liberal system of education in his native land. The extent of fascist boldness may be understood when, on reading this pamphlet, we find Sarmiento, the Argentine liberator, blatantly ridiculed for such qualities as "Masonic liberalism," "snobbish foreignism," "advocacy of non-sectarian education" and -- of all things -- "democracy."

This pamphlet furnishes an index to the underlying purpose of all fascist propaganda in Latin America. It is to undermine the popular faith in traditional democratic government.

Definition of a Mexican "Aryan"--by Hitler

A Nazi in Mexico, perplexed about the racial status of his Mexican wife, wrote to his party in Berlin to learn the rules of Aryanism. The answer he received, with the imprint of the Juridical Department of the Foreign Section of the Nazi Party in Berlin, states: "If it were proven that your wife is of pure Spanish blood, that would make her an Aryan." In general, one has to assume, however, the letter continues, that some time in the past there was admixture between the Spanish Mexican families and the native non-Aryan race. Thus it is necessary that the Nazi's wife declare herself willing to prove that there is no mixture of Indian blood in her family, or at least that there has been no such mixture since 1800.

So the Nazis have decided to include the pure Spaniard into their pure "Aryan" ranks and to include even those Spaniards who are pure only since 1800. Such is the flexibility of the "Aryan" race theory. It would seem that it can be remolded according to the immediate purpose of fascist penetration of the moment. A previous theory was voiced in 1937 by the Italian General Camorata when he arrived in Lima, Peru, from Abyssinia to command the Lima police (the officers of which were imported from the Italian "OVRA" or secret police). His mission, he hinted, was to "civilize" the natives of Peru as he had civilized the Ethiopians. He said that "the Peruvians, like the Ecuadorians, the Chileans and in general all the peoples of Latin America, are ethnologically, culturally and morally inferior, incapable and even dangerous for the development and progress of the human species and human civilization."